

**TORRINGTON  
RURAL DISTRICT  
1946.**

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**REPORTS  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
AND SANITARY SURVEYOR**

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**FOR THE YEAR ENDING  
31ST DECEMBER, 1946.**

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**GREAT TORRINGTON :**  
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HEALTH DEPARTMENT,  
HODGE'S CHAMBERS,  
TORRINGTON.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Torrington  
Rural District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

We have pleasure in presenting our ANNUAL  
REPORTS for the year ended 31st December, 1946.

We are, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

E. H. WALKER, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.,

Medical Officer of Health.

F. G. GANE, M.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.,

Sanitary Inspector & Building Surveyor.



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# Torrington Rural District.

1946

## General Statistics.

Area (Acres)...	...	...	...	...	...	79,793
Population (R.G.)	...	...	...	...	...	7,135
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	...	...	2,233
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£19,425
Sum realised by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	...	£83 10s. 4d.

## Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

Live Births ... Male 42, Female 41, Total 83.

Increase of 17 on previous year.

Birth Rate per 1000 of estimated Population ... 11'6

Deaths .. 70. A decrease of 1.

Death Rate per 1000 of estimated Resident Population ... 9'8

## General Sanitary Conditions of the District.

### Officials.

The Officials of the District are the Medical Officer of Health, who is a part time official, and a full time Sanitary Inspector. A Monthly Report is made to the Council.

### Nursing.

The District is provided with Midwives and Nurses by Nursing Associations with the help of County Council grants. There also appear to be an increasing number of Inspectors.

### Hospitals.

The District is served by Torrington, Bideford, Barnstaple and Exeter Hospitals. Most of these want doubling in size judging from the waiting lists, and Nursing Staffs likewise. Better Health Services are unlikely unless this is accomplished first.

### School and County Health Services.

Clinics of various sorts are increasing and appear popular.

### **Isolation Hospital and Infectious Diseases.**

Very little Infectious Disease has occurred during the last year. The District is well served by the combined areas Isolation Hospital at Bideford, and Tuberculosis is admirably looked after by the County T.B. Officer, but there is rather a long wait for sanatorium treatment.

### **Ambulance Service.**

The area is served by Ambulances at Bideford and Barnstaple. There is an excellent new one presented to Torrington by its sister town in the United States.

### **Laboratory Facilities.**

The County Laboratory at Exeter provides an excellent service for all examinations and investigations.

### **Schools.**

These are being brought up to date but can never be good until a main water supply is provided for the area. In an agricultural area it seems rather futile to keep prospective workers at school for another year when there is a labour shortage.

### **Maternity Services.**

The District Midwives look after the majority of mothers and there are also visiting Health Visitors. Patients have examination before and after their confinements by their own doctor under a health scheme. In these days of no help being available more and more expectant mothers have to go to hospitals. The County Health Department has made some arrangements throughout the district for this. However, local councils must be prepared to watch the progress of a new adventure as it may be that the planners of the County may try to segregate all prospective mothers into four or five large maternity hospitals, causing inconvenience and discomfort to the patients and their friends. Local hospital accommodation should be provided as far as possible.

Premature and illegitimate children are well cared for under the above services and at the baby clinic.

### **Dairies and Cowsheds.**

These have to a large extent been improved as far as can be expected. They are, however, a motley collection, and a large number want re-building on modern lines and urgently need a main water supply in many cases. Electricity is also another modern necessity which should be installed everywhere. It is rather a soulless job inspecting cowsheds when farmers are unable to carry out improvements under the present restrictions.

### **Housing.**

This has been held up during the war, but a big building programme is being started, and it is hoped that an adequate and pure water supply will be found for them at all periods. It seems this was almost impossible in the past.

### **Venereal Disease.**

These cases are few in a rural area such as this. The local clinic is at Barnstaple.

### **Infestation.**

Scabies and lice do not occur in the district except in a very small number of cases and these are diminishing now the evacuees have returned.

### **Water.**

Water is generally bad in quality and quantity. In some parts the water is plumbo-solvent and copper or asbestos pipes have to be used. A main water supply to the whole area is very urgently necessary.

### **Immunisation against Diphtheria.**

Each school is visited once a year and practically all children attending school have been immunised. A check up of those missed at a previous visit is carried out at the same time. Health Visitors now help in trying to get all pre-school age infants brought to the school at the same time, and the percentage of those immunised is now high. As far as can be checked 99 per cent. of school children and 93 per cent. of pre-school age children have been immunised. Another tour of immunisation will be carried out after Easter.





# Annual Report of Sanitary Inspector.

## General Inspections.

Dwellings inspected under Housing Acts	...	...	14
Dwellings inspected under Public Health Acts	...	...	87
Re-inspections under Housing Acts	...	...	17
Re-inspections under Public Health Acts	...	...	35
Supervisory visits under the Housing Rural Workers' Act	...	...	—
Keeping of Animals	...	...	1
Offensive accumulations	...	...	2
Enquiries into cases of Infectious Disease	...	...	4
Number of rooms disinfected	...	...	5
Visits to Factories	...	...	5
„ „ Bakehouses	...	...	4
„ „ Schools	...	...	5
Food inspections	...	...	3
Number of Milk samples	...	...	3
Number of Water samples	...	...	9
Building inspections under Bye-laws	...	...	52
Visits to Council Houses	...	...	24
Defective drains	...	...	22
Drains tested	...	...	29
Rats and mice	...	...	3
Plans investigated	...	...	60
Cowsheds inspected	...	...	30
Petroleum inspections	...	...	4
Dirty houses	...	...	—
Farm Water supplies	...	...	8
Miscellaneous	...	...	283

## HOUSING.

### Housing improvements carried out and nuisances abated at premises (other than Farms and Dairies).

<i>External.</i>	<i>No. of houses.</i>
Walls repaired	23
Roofs repaired	22
Guttering repaired	5
Downspouts repaired	4
Chimneys repaired	7
Water supply laid on into houses	5
New pumps provided	7
Wells cleansed	1
Well steinings repaired	1
Hot water systems fixed	8
New lengths drain laid	19
Defective drains repaired	1



New inspection chambers	...	...	...	...	12
Septic tanks repaired	...	...	...	...	1
New septic tanks	...	...	...	...	15
New gullies	...	...	...	...	13
New W.C's.	...	...	...	...	27
Water supply laid on to W.C's.	...	...	...	...	4
W.C. cisterns renewed	...	...	...	...	3
New washing accommodation	...	...	...	...	3
Outbuildings repaired	...	...	...	...	1
Houses painted	...	...	...	...	10

*Internal.*

Walls replastered	...	...	...	...	10
Ceilings replastered	...	...	...	...	20
Windows repaired	...	...	...	...	11
Doors repaired	...	...	...	...	5
Floors repaired	...	...	...	...	10
Cooking appliances repaired or renewed	...	...	...	...	41
New sinks	...	...	...	...	11
New sculleries	...	...	...	...	4
Baths installed	...	...	...	...	11
Food storage improved	...	...	...	...	1

**1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year :**

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	101
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	153
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	14
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	14
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	1
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	100

**2. Remedy of Defects during the year without service of formal Notices :—**

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers

### 3. Action under Statutory Powers during the year :

#### A. Proceedings under Sections 17, 18 and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930.

- |     |  |        |     |
|-----|--|--------|-----|
| (1) | Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs  | ...    | Nil |
| (2) | Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :— |        |     |
| (a) | by owners  | ... .. | Nil |
| (b) | by local authority in default of owners  | ...    | Nil |

#### B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts :—

- |     |  |        |     |
|-----|--|--------|-----|
| (1) | Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied | ... .. | Nil |
| (2) | Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—        |        |     |
| (a) | by owners  | ... .. | Nil |
| (b) | by local authority in default of owners  | ...    | Nil |

#### C. Proceedings under Sections 19 and 21 of the Housing Act, 1930.

- |     |   |        |     |
|-----|---|--------|-----|
| (1) | Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made | ... .. | Nil |
| (2) | Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders    | ... .. | Nil |

#### D. Proceedings under Section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930

- |     |   |        |     |
|-----|---|--------|-----|
| (1) | Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made  | ... .. | Nil |
| (2) | Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit | ... .. | Nil |

#### New Housing Accommodation.

Number of new houses erected by local authority	...	Nil
„ „ new houses erected by private enterprise	...	2
„ „ premises converted into dwellings	...	5
„ „ houses converted into two dwellings	...	1
„ „ temporary bungalows erected (private)	...	1

## Council Housing Programme.

Contracts have been signed and work commenced on a pair of houses in the following parishes :—Weare Giffard, Dolton, Alverdiscott, Ashreigney, Merton and High Bickington.

### CIVIL BUILDING LICENCES.

#### Licences issued in respect of repairs, maintenance or miscellaneous building work to housing.

No. of licences issued.	Value in £
198	18,662

#### Licences issued in respect of all building work other than housing.

No. of licences issued.	Value in £
74	4,521

#### Licences issued for conversions and adaptations by private enterprise to provide additional housing accommodation.

Total value in £	Total No. of family units of accommodation provided
1955	6

## Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milk Supply.

There are 558 registered Cow-keepers in the District including 89 Retailer-producers. Several visits have been made during the year and advice has been given on structural alterations and clean milk production. Many of the cow-sheds are in an unsatisfactory state and need remodelling. A number of farmers are anxious to bring their buildings up to date but are unable to do so at the moment owing to licensing restrictions.

The following improvements have been carried out to 19 farm buildings during the year :—

Floors, standings, troughs, etc., concreted	...	3
Lighting and ventilation improved	...	3
Walls rendered	...	3
Drainage improved	...	3
Approaches improved	...	1
Roofs repaired	...	4
Walls repaired	...	1
Water supplies improved	...	4
Cow-sheds remodelled	...	5
New cow-sheds erected	...	3



There are 28 Accredited Producers and 4 Tuberculin Tested Producers in the district.

Most of the milk produced in the area goes to two milk factories where samples are regularly taken for examination under the National Milk Testing Scheme. Samples are also taken by the Sampling Officers of the County Council from T. T. and Accredited Producers.

### **Inspection and Supervision of Food.**

Animals intended for human consumption in this district are slaughtered at the Public Abattoir at Bideford, where the carcasses and offals are subjected to inspection before allocation.

The only food condemned during the year was 20 lbs. margarine which was returned to the suppliers for processing.

### **Water Supplies.**

There are 26 public wells in the district. These are now the responsibility of the North Devon Water Board, but the Council maintain them on their behalf. The water supply of the district cannot be regarded as satisfactory and it is hoped that a piped supply will soon be made available to all districts by the North Devon Water Board. A start is soon to be made with a piped supply to the village of Winkleigh.

### **Plans.**

60 plans were submitted during the year, and apart from modifications, all were approved on the recommendation of the North Devon Joint Planning Committee.

### **Sewage Disposal.**

No new sewers or disposal installations have been constructed during the year. The existing arrangements cannot be regarded as satisfactory in some of the villages and the advent of a piped water supply will necessitate modern disposal systems in all villages. There is a very urgent need for a proper disposal system for the village of Winkleigh in view of the proposed water scheme.

### **Petroleum and Calcium Carbide Licences.**

2 calcium carbide licences were issued during the year and 18 petroleum licences.

### **Slaughtering Licences.**

51 licences were issued during the period.









